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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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FIRST CLASS

LETTERS

RTN is to be commended for uncovering the sinister machinations of yet another agency working to destroy the passenger train. Apparently it occurred to the FRA bureaucrats that they had not been harassing Amtrak enough lately, so they cooked up a set of totally arbitrary speed limits under the guise of (oh! the hypocrisy) safety. With Freedom of Information it will no doubt be possible to expose the role of the CIA and FBI in the decline of the pre-Amtrak network.

Two errors: If I am correctly interpreting your presentation of Amtrak's data (RTN #196), the increases given are in running time, not schedule time. The small changes on UP and SP probably reflect their wide use of 133-136 lb rail (and, on the STARLIGHT's route, the fact that topography limits opportunities for 70mph running). The BUILDER's route includes long stretches of excellent 80mph track that, due to lower freight traffic density, is laid with 115-119 lb welded rail. The limit here would be reduced to 60mph. RTN mistakenly gave the present limit on Class 4 track as 60 instead of 80mph.

Tim Zukas
Oakland, California

Dan Monaghan's cheap shot against California rail supporters (last issue, p. 19) does scant credit to this fine and articulate gentleman from Texas. Dan basically implies that we in California have sold out to DOT and that our 403-b operations are only a temporary aberrance which will end when the Highway Lobby finally drives Jerry Brown out. Dan's fanciful reading of the facts must be challenged.

(1) Dan's view of California's rail program proves the old adage that you can always find a gray lining in every silver cloud. Do I not detect a tinge of jealousy because Texas has no rail program?

(2) Dan states that California does not want to "rock the boat" because of its 403-b program. Poppycock! Citizens for Rail California lobbied for the entire system. After beating back efforts to eliminate the ZEPHYR and SOUTHWEST LIMITED, and after gaining the DESERT WIND (being "bought off"?), California then voted 23-18 to support Gore-Fowler (at CRC's urging)! Dan, you lost your trains because Texas gave only a 3-vote margin for Gore (13-10). We in California, who stood only to gain, gave you a 5-vote margin. In all due charity, some states that stood to lose the most did pathetically little in their own best interests. Instead of searching for heretics out West, Dan, why not lobby your Congressmen, as we are lobbying ours, to make the SUNSET LIMITED a daily train? By the way, is that a 403-b train?

Carl H. Schiermeyer,
Vice-President
Citizens for Rail California
San Diego, California

The FRA's proposed rule reducing passenger train speeds according to rail weight should not be implemented, as it is not only counterproductive, but totally ignores the real world of track stress.

The only class of passenger locomotive which did cause excessive track stress has been identified and modified or operates under speed restriction. Anyone familiar with freight car construction knows the prime cause for rail misalignment comes from 100-ton capacity 50-foot freight cars. These cars exert a 65-ton truck load, and as the truck centers coincide with the standard 39-foot rail length, such cars cause a 65-ton "pound" simultaneously on each end of jointed rail, causing the rail center to displace upwards, weakening the track structure. The heavy truck/axle load also causes downward displacement at the joint, the weakest point of the track structure. While welded rail does not suffer this strain, the heavily loaded freight cars still produce far greater stress than passenger cars do.

Conversely, passenger equipment, with its long wheelbase and light weight, does not produce these strains on the track.

The proposed rule is counterproductive as it will drive passengers from trains at a time when our energy considerations require the opposite result.

William R. Wright
Cranford, New Jersey

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ON THE COVER

The last weekend of 1979 saw the last passenger runs on the Sierra Railroad tourist line in Northern California. Engine 28 pulling a trainload of joyriders appears to be a ghostly relic framed amid the oak trees and long, summer-ripe grass in this photo taken a few years ago by Peter Putnam Bretz. As reported earlier, railroad was sold to lumber company Louisiana-Pacific Corp.

RIDING THE LOUISIANA SWAMP TRAIN
(Or, Scheduled Piddling on the SUNSET)

by Adron F. Hall.

Friday, Dec 28, eight days after Amtrak's court action against Southern Pacific to run the SUNSET LIMITED on schedule, we decided to ride the westbound train no. 1 in the area of its worst problems, New Orleans to Houston across the swamps and bayous of Louisiana.

The train accelerated out of New Orleans UPT on time at 1pm, missing the late-arriving connection from the PANAMA LIMITED (due at 10:35am). Many of the 130 passengers were impressed by the aerial ride across the Huey P. Long Bridge and the grand view of the Mississippi River.

Then came the first stop at 1:35pm at an SP yard on the west shore of the river, and the scenario continued as follows:

1:37 Stopped again, awaiting long SP freight crawling into the yard.
2:04 Started, 27 minutes lost.
2:24 Stopped in siding. In siding ahead was engine and caboose which had brought out crew to relieve crew of over-200-car freight we were meeting. The crew changed, the freight headed east, and the SUNSET backed out of the siding.
2:55 The SUNSET headed west as engine and caboose went back east. 31 minutes lost.
3:17 First station stop out of New Orleans at Schriever to pick up three passengers. Now 55 minutes late.
3:45 Stop at Morgan City for open drawbridge. Two minutes lost.
4:02 Stop at track work site for new siding. One minute lost.
4:18 Stop at Baldwin. Approaching meet with freight. Two minutes lost.
4:23 Into siding to allow long freight to proceed east. After the freight has passed, SUNSET remains. SP's trainmaster, Bob Ludden, and an Amtrak official from Ft. Worth who have been riding in the engine go thru the train to find

the conductor. Together they inspect the siding track just in front of the lead SDP and decide the track, minus many spikes and a couple of crossties, is not safe for the train to proceed forward, so the SUNSET backs out of the siding.

4:47 SUNSET again commences forward progress. 24 minutes lost.
4:50 Back in hi-level coach, discover window shot by teenager who had been walking nearby with rifle.
4:58 Passing freight in siding--15mph.
5:01 Go into siding, passing caboose of standing freight. Freight then backs east to let #1 proceed out of west end of siding.
5:04 Forward again, passing thru Jeanerette, Louisiana. Three minutes lost.
5:20 Station stop at New Iberia: 3 passengers off; 1 coach and 5 first class on. Now 1 hour, 28 minutes late.
5:42 Arrive Lafayette 1 hour, 22 minutes late. Five passengers off; 15 coach, 2 first class on.
5:53 Depart after standing in station extra minutes for no apparent reason.
5:58 Stop. Begin backing move while blocking four-lane highway with at least 40 vehicles backed up.
6:01 Forward again. No obvious reason for backing.
6:06 Proceeding at 10mph threading thru yard.
6:10 Stopped in siding to meet freight.
6:11 Started again after about 12 minutes lost.

After proceeding unobstructed for 1 hour, 20 minutes, the SUNSET arrived in Lake Charles 1 hour, 35 minutes late, where about 20 passengers boarded and eight detrained. Conductor "Frenchy" Guidry (father of popular New York Yankee pitcher Ron Guidry) checked his computer listing to see that he could expect 85 boarding in Houston. They would have a bit of a wait.

Even with the delays, the passengers were not complaining, as the train was clean and comfortable. Most were relaxing in their spacious seats or enjoying the lounge and dining car, both with courteous, efficient service personnel.

On the second-section Greyhound returning to New Orleans, the packed bus was smoky and the passengers restless. The highlights were an altercation between a woman and two deadheading bus drivers, and a stop by a state trooper for speeding at 77mph. The bus arrived in New Orleans on time.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Although the INTER-AMERICAN survived the recent round of route cuts, the route remains in danger of discontinuance. If the route does not achieve the congressional criteria of 150 PM/TM with an avoidable loss of less than 7¢/PM, the train may be discontinued in October 1981. It has been reported that four trains have been singled out for possible discontinuance in 1981: the SUNSET LIMITED, the EMPIRE BUILDER, the CRESCENT, and the INTER-AMERICAN. In order to thwart these route reduction plans, it is imperative that route improvements be made now--NOT after months of studies and further delay. Amtrak must be encouraged to implement these improvements within the next several months, not in "late 1980" or some 'unspecified future date.' The importance of congressional pressure to expedite Amtrak's improvements cannot be underestimated."

--Arkansas Association of RR Passengers newsletter,
Oct-Nov-Dec issue.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"The Reno airport reopened later in the day... Greyhound and Trailway said they added a total of 33 buses to their runs, and Amtrak said all trains out of Reno were booked through Monday."

--San Francisco Chronicle, Jan 5.

(Every last one of 'em.)

SECOND SAN JOAQUIN TRAIN TO START OPERATION

Amtrak formally announced on Jan 8 that the second SAN JOAQUIN train will begin operation on Feb 3. With the added service, to be partially funded by the state of California, SAN JOAQUINS will provide twice-daily frequency with morning and afternoon departures from both the San Francisco-Oakland and Bakersfield ends of the line. Connecting bus service will be available for all trains to and from Los Angeles and Bakersfield. The schedule of the new trains, #708 and 709, is shown below. The schedule of present train 710 is changed, to leave Oakland 25 minutes earlier.

READ DOWN			READ UP	
708	710		711	709
700 AM	500 PM	SAN FRANCISCO	105 PM	1055 P
725	530	OAKLAND	1240	1030
738	543	RICHMOND	1219	1009
808	613	MARTINEZ	1150 AM	940
825	630	PORT CHICAGO (CREW STOP)	1135	925
925	730	STOCKTON	1025	815
955	800	RIVERBANK	955	745
1045	850	MERCED	915	705
1120	925	MADERA	840	630
1155	1000	FRESNO	805	555
1200 PM	1005	FRESNO	800	550
1235	1040	HANFORD	725	515
125	1130	WASCO	630	420
200 PM	1205 AM	BAKERSFIELD	605 AM	355 PM

The present SAN JOAQUIN service is also subsidized 20% by the state of California. No inaugural ceremony plans are available yet.

SUNSET LIMITED STILL BEING DELAYED

An Amtrak spokesman said that the SUNSET LIMITED is still being delayed on the SP between New Orleans and Houston. The delays, due primarily to freight train interference, continue despite the Amtrak suit against the railroad, filed by the Justice Dept. on Dec 20 (see last issue). A hearing date of Feb 4 has been set to determine whether a permanent injunction should be granted against the railroad. One possible outcome of the hearing is that the SP could be found to be in contempt of court and fined.

The train reached its end-point on time on Dec 23 and 24, but on other days in Dec and early Jan continued to run behind schedule, Amtrak said.

PIONEER BECOMES RESCUE TRAIN

Amtrak's PIONEER became a rescue train when a severe snowstorm hit the Pacific Northwest in the second week of January. Train 25 made a special stop at Cascade Locks OR on Jan 9 to pick up 40 stranded travelers. On the following day another rescue of 60 people was made from the same location, that group including people from Stevenson WA. The town of Dodson OR, isolated by the storm by all but rail

transportation, was running out of food. The Union Pacific brought in personnel with food by freight train, and Amtrak train 25 brought them back to their point of origin. At 4:40pm on Jan 10, train 25 made a special stop at Bonneville Dam OR to pick up 32 stranded people. Once again rail proved to be the "all-weather" mode of transportation.

RAIL CANADA

VIA RAIL AGENTS are now required to insert train time and number on all tickets, even on unreserved and local trains. Passengers buying roundtrip tickets who do not know the train or date of their return are told to have the ticket "endorsed" at the ticket office before return. The purpose of this is unclear, since it serves no function, and the information cannot be used to predict loads. Conductors seem unaware of the rule. The main result is to increase lines at stations.

THE PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL'S 11am departure south from Vancouver is expected by Amtrak observers to change in February to a 7am time. The present schedule has not worked out for development of patronage, in part because the "corridor"-type service with a Seattle run-thru southbound was not matched by a similar northbound trip.

NEXT TRANSPORT MINISTER may be Ed Lumley. Canadian observers are predicting a Liberal victory in coming elections, with a minority Liberal government being pushed towards a greater assistance for rail (plus cheap gasoline) by the New Democrats who are expected to occupy a more important place in the new house after Feb 18. Before the recent (unexpected) government shakeup, Mr. Lumley met with Transport 2000 head Harry Gow and a group of Liberal M.P.'s and Senators who wanted to dream up a new transportation policy to unveil next spring (not expecting an election so soon). Gow advised the group to dig out its pro-rail and transit platform of 1974. Whether they will change from their pro-highway and air policies should be known soon. Lumley reportedly shows strong support for rail passenger services, along with STOL.

CANADIAN NATIONAL'S RAIL operation boasts a new logo (at right). A recent magazine ad for CN Rail pictures two executives riding in a jet, having breakfast over the newspaper. "Because we deliver the paper on time, you get the news on time" reads the caption. An observer notes that everyone who sees the ad, non-railfans included, comments that it shows what CN thinks of passenger trains. The executives COULD have been shown in an office setting.

CN RAIL
We want to give you our best.

VIA'S PRINCIPAL COMPETITOR in the Eastern Corridor, Voyageur Bus Lines, is in financial trouble, Paul Martin told Transport 2000 in a recent phone conversation. Martin complained that VIA's "subsidies" are killing Voyageur's profits. He said their fares, particularly, are doing this. He told T-2000 that Voyageur prefers not to ask for subsidies, even tho the Quebec bus operators' association is asking the Quebec government for them. The Quebec government should sooner BUY Voyageur, Martin said. Some rail supporters believe that VIA should buy Voyageur and integrate terminals, schedules and ticketing. This would fit in with Frank Roberts' ideas of intermodality and rationalization.

VIA'S "CENTRALIZATION" MOVE at Montreal's Central Station was stopped by CN, which opposed the loss of its lucrative Rapido contract. The CP Trains from Mt. Laurier, Hull and Quebec City were to run into Central Station thru the CN tunnel. CN opposed this, as the CN south-shore Rapidos would be eliminated in favour of the north-shore CP line trains (LRCs ultimately). CP local stops would no doubt have been eliminated under the plan.

HEARINGS ON THE (Toronto)-Capreol-Winnipeg route were held by the CTC Dec 3-7 at Sioux Lookout, Nakina and Capreol. Transport 2000 Outaouai's president Bob Worrell had performed a needs survey over the line, which showed that passenger

rail was the dominant mode on the line, that the populace wanted thru service to Toronto, and that they regretted the departure of the SUPER CONTINENTAL. Many individuals and groups showed up to testify, most concentrating on local needs, but T-2000 Ontario unveiled a tourist train proposal serving Sault-Ste Marie, at Capreol. From the hearing outcome, T-2000 is predicting: (1) daily service, (2) Toronto connections, (3) better food service on diners, and (4) a consultative committee to include T-2000, as in previous CTC decisions.

EDMONTON'S LRT SYSTEM experienced three vehicle-train collisions in the same day. On Dec 21 two vehicles ran into trains at different times at 125th Avenue and 66th Street, while a third car struck a stopped train at 82nd Avenue & 50th Street.

VIA'S SUPER CONTINENTAL traversed its fromer route thru New Westminster, B.C., from Dec 3 to about Dec 20 on weekdays due to bridge repair work at Mission City. Train 3 rejoined the normal (Port Coquitlam) route about 40mins ahead of schedule and ran as an extra into Vancouver, while #4 was set back 40mins out of Vancouver so as not to be early at Matsqui Junction, end of its normal "detour" over the CP to serve Port Coquitlam.

TOO SUCCESSFUL COMPLAINT: Transport 2000 had complained to the CTC about the lack of thru sleepers at Winnipeg from the CANADIAN and SUPER CONTINENTAL western legs. The CTC then ordered that, in addition to sleepers, the coaches and Dayniters be added to the Winnipeg transfer, adding 40 minutes to the Winnipeg stop for switching, according to VIA. Maybe we should ask that only the sleepers be switched, lamented T-2000.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT bridge under construction southwest of Stampede Park in Calgary collapsed suddenly on Dec 16 and fell into the Elbow River. The east half of the structure remained standing. Officials could not immediately explain the collapse of the 400-foot section. There were no injuries.

CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN commuter line between Chicago and Kenosha, Wisconsin should be extended 11 miles north to Racine, transit officials believe. It would require a $1 million track-upgrading program.

NEW YORK SUBWAYS will return to service 100 R-16 cars built by ACF in 1955 and retired in 1975, to substitute for R-46 cars that have developed undercarriage cracks. The cracks were detected in 1977 when a motor fell onto an axle.

AN EXTENSIVE STUDY by Booz, Allen & Hamilton Inc. of the MTA's Long Island RR and its Metropolitan Division--three Conrail-operated lines from Grand Central--concludes that reliability is seriously declining. The study says that LIRR equipment reliability is worse on new than on older equipment. On the Conrail lines, equipment failure caused over half the delays in 1978; there, bad-order rates are above industry average and productivity of maintenance employees is dropping. Maintenance costs on the LIRR almost doubled in 4 years while on-time performance declined almost 10% from 1975 to 1978.

THE LONG ISLAND Rail Road extended Smithtown-Huntington train 609 to Hunterspoint Avenue, following commuter lobbying supported by Congressman Jerome Ambro. It also added new service on the Ronkondoma line effective Dec 15.

THE VALPARAISO LINE is expected to be discontinued when the present federal subsidy to Amtrak to operate it runs out. Indiana officials have made no plans to continue the service. At the same time, the South Bend is surviving, and the line expects to take bids on new cars in January.

CHICAGO'S MAYOR BYRNE on Jan 3 announced her massive $1.1 billion transportation plan for the Chicago area, which includes improvements to the Loop elevated and new transit lines to the Southwest Side and downtown.

FIRST PASSENGER FATALITY (non-suicide) on BART occurred on Jan 10 at the Oakland West station when an 85-year old man, apparently confused and crossing the

(continued on page 19)

AMTRAK IGNORES THE VIRGINIA CORRIDOR

by Joseph Vranich

The "Virginia Corridor" is that route currently served by Amtrak linking Washington DC with Alexandria, Quantico, Fredericksburg, Richmond, Williamsburg and Newport News.

This is a portion of the route of the COLONIAL, a popular Amtrak train that originates in Boston and operates thru to Newport News. In the Washington-Richmond section of the route, Amtrak operates other trains which serve the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida.

Amtrak is again overlooking travel opportunities and needs in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Specifically, Amtrak is not including the prime Virginia Corridor in a study to determine routes that should receive more Amtrak service (see "Eleven new corridors being studied", LTN # 196). The study is to be issued on Jan 30, 1980.

While most of the 11 corridors being studied do indeed have good market potential (e.g., L.A.-San Diego), the harsh fact is that every route under study by Amtrak operates at a financial loss--a loss subsidized by taxpayers. Amtrak is not studying the Washington-Richmond-Newport News route despite the virtue of its being one of the few Amtrak operates that registers a PROFIT on an avoidable costing basis. In Fiscal Year 1978, the COLONIAL route earned over $1.2 million in profit. A question to Amtrak about this route's financial status in Fiscal 1979 has remained unanswered.

Amtrak said in announcing its study: "Population concentration, the market for increased travel and the potential for competitive rail passenger service between cities served as the basis for selection for the possible corridors."

The integrity of this statement is in serious question, considering that the population along the Virginia Corridor is larger than other routes Amtrak is studying (e.g., Seattle-Portland route population is smaller); the market in Virginia for both business and recreational travel is strong and growing; and the physical plant of the rail lines in Virginia is superior to other routes which are receiving Amtrak study.

With high gasoline prices causing record-breaking numbers of travelers to shift to Amtrak, and with the public's desire for government to be more responsive to energy and fiscal considerations in developing programs, it is inconceivable that Amtrak would exclude the prime Virginia Corridor from its study. It is clear that Amtrak is not objectively studying true market potential, profit-and-loss impact, best-case contributions to help solve our energy problems, or sound capital investment strategies in its route study.

While Amtrak operates several trains between Washington and Richmond, it operates only the COLONIAL east of Richmond to Tidewater. The COLONIAL is a heavily-patronized train along its route. There have been times on portions of the route in Virginia when passengers have had to stand on this train because patronage exceeded seating capacity.

Better market development of the Virginia Corridor requires the operation of at least a second daily roundtrip. This should be a morning train southbound and an evening train northbound, complementing the schedule of the COLONIAL. This schedule would be similar to what was provided between Washington and Richmond by the HILLTOPPER, a train that unfortunately was discontinued on Oct 1, 1979. While the HILLTOPPER was indeed a poorly patronized train thru Southwest Virginia and the rural areas in West Virginia and Kentucky, it was becoming astonishingly popular in the Washington-Richmond portion of its route.

The latest ridership figures from Amtrak show the effects of the public's concern about energy and gasoline prices on the HILLTOPPER's ridership levels (see adjoining table).

Amtrak is almost nine years old, and throughout its history it never attained such large percentage ridership increases on any other route.

Most of the HILLTOPPER's ridership growth was experienced in the Washington-Richmond portion of its route. Other Amtrak trains plying that stretch also showed rapid and impressive gains this year compared to previous years. It is inconceivable that Amtrak is not now considering restoration of a HILLTOPPER-type schedule between Washington and Richmond, with this added train serving as the second roundtrip to Williamsburg and Newport News.

The potential of the Virginia Corridor is no secret at Amtrak. On Jun 13, 1976, when the COLONIAL was inaugurated, then-Amtrak President Paul H. Reistrup said, "The COLONIAL is the first direct train service in history between the Northeast and Tidewater Virginia on the Williamsburg route." He added, "I should stress that this is an experimental train. Its success will hinge on the number of people who patronize the service."

The train was later termed a success and Amtrak recognized its permanent status by constructing a $1-million track connection in Richmond to simplify operations.

The COLONIAL was begun in place of a Newport News-Charlottesville-Chicago train. A booklet issued by the passenger carrier, entitled "Background on Amtrak," points out: "On this restructured route, the COLONIAL has been carrying over two times as many passengers as the former train." Today, it would be safe to say three times as many. In 1979, patronage at Newport News and Williamsburg was almost double what it was in 1978. Richmond traffic in 1978 was 90% higher than in 1977. Fredericksburg traffic in 1978 was 150% higher than 1975, the year before the COLONIAL started operation.

Amtrak recognized this line's potential for more frequent service not long after the COLONIAL started operation. A formal 5-Year Plan, approved by Amtrak on Sep 28, 1976, and submitted to Congress and the Administration, included the Washington-Newport News corridor as an example of one with "required population density and moderate intercity distances that allow for development of multiple rail services." (Emphasis added.)

With such views already expressed at Amtrak, the absence of this route from its current study reflects a serious and unexplained contradiction in the organization's goals and values. It also suggests that Amtrak's new planners do not understand the Amtrak charter.

Reasons for healthy patronage levels on the COLONIAL as well as on the Washington-Richmond portion of the discontinued HILLTOPPER are numerous:

(1) A sizable population exists along the route, a population that continues to grow. Amtrak's Market Research Dept. as the figures totaled and on file.

(2) Air service between points in the Virginia Corridor and certain northeast cities (e.g., Richmond-Baltimore) has declined in frequency as deregulation permits air carriers to abandon short-haul air markets for longer-haul ones.

(3) There is significant commercial activity, with more developing, in most communities directly on or near the route.

(4) Establishment of theme parks (Kings Dominion at Doswell and Busch Gardens' The Old Country at Williamsburg) has substantially increased recreational travel. It should be noted that on one day in July, 1979 there were 183 buses in the Kings Dominion bus lot, indicating a rich group marketing potential for Amtrak.

(5) The primary alternative to train travel--driving along I-95-- is no longer an attractive alternative for growing numbers of people because of (a) increased congestion which causes increasing frustration; (b) higher prices for gasoline and worries about gasoline availability in the evenings and on some weekends and holidays; (c) increased discomfort on intermediate-distance trips as more families have purchased compact automobiles; and (d) slower trip times resulting from the 55mph speed limit.

Amtrak could attract a still-greater share of passengers along the Virginia Corridor and insure that the second frequency to Tidewater would become extremely popular. Amtrak should undertake a "route improvement program" so that a broader portion of the public could conveniently use these trains. Examples of needed improvements:

(1) As stated, two daily trains should operate in each direction to Newport News.

(2) A summer-only stop should be established on all trains at Busch Gardens, east of the existing Williamsburg stop, which should be retained. The tracks are located directly across from the main gate of this major theme park. Amtrak's ability to attract the one- and two-day recreational travel market will be greatly enhanced.

(3) Doswell should be established as a regular stop on all trains bound for, or originating in, Newport News. This would enable Amtrak to lure a larger part of the significant market from both the Northeast and Tidewater areas. (It must be pointed out that this market was actually "turned off" by Amtrak when Doswell was served by the HILL-TOPPER, because Amtrak could not handle the large numbers who wanted to ride the train to Kings Dominion. Amtrak regularly refused all group requests of more than 50 people because such numbers would force Amtrak to operate many extra cars--cars that would run empty all the way to Kentucky. Traffic was further deterred by Amtrak's failure to staff the Doswell station in summer. Had Amtrak taken more aggressive actions, the HILL-TOPPER's skyrocketing gains would have been even higher.)

(4) To better tap the Tidewater market, Amtrak should construct a new station in Newport News as Amtrak itself proposed on Oct 10, 1977. This region is not adequately served because of Amtrak's terrible station location at the city's shipping piers. A new station should be located at the Huntington Avenue site, a convenient downtown location west of the present site. This would reduce train travel time to Newport News by about seven minutes while enhancing accessibility for those traveling to Norfolk or other points on the southern portion of the bay.

(5) At Newport News, year-round bus connections to Norfolk and at least summer-only bus connections to Virginia Beach would result in still another broadening of Amtrak's market. Many passengers bound for the Tidewater area decline to travel on Amtrak when they learn they will be "on their own" at Newport News. Since 1971, Amtrak has provided such connecting bus service between Oakland and San Francisco --another location where railroad tracks do not cross the bay--and passenger usage of such service remains high. The bus connection offers thru baggage transfers and does not require separate ticketing.

(6) A legitimate concern is that adding stops at Busch Gardens and Kings Dominion would add time to Amtrak train schedules, usually 5 minutes per stop. Opportunities should be explored to overcome the prospect of added time One suggestion would be to eliminate the lightly-patronized stop at Lee Hall. This would be easier to accomplish if the Newport News station were to be relocated in the manner already described. Another prospect for speeding schedules would be to increase passenger train speeds in Richmond where the train transfers from the Chessie System to the RF&P.

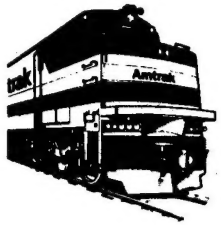
(7) The quality of station and baggage services along the route needs to be improved, or in some cases established from scratch. Station staffing was removed from Fredericksburg in 1975 when about 4000 passengers boarded or left Amtrak trains there. In 1978, about 10,000 passengers used the Fredericksburg station, but it continued to be unstaffed--meaning one cannot purchase tickets there or check baggage. Amtrak must have a greater dedication to providing service in its stations.

(8) Finally, it is surprising that Amtrak traffic is healthy in the Virginia Corridor considering that Amtrak treats availability of its services as a secret. Altho a second daily train would certainly draw many new customers, an advertising campaign along the route is clearly needed.

Two transportation developments will induce greater Amtrak travel in the Virginia Corridor and deserve mention:

First, as the $2 billion federally sponsored Amtrak improvement project progresses in the NE Corridor between Boston and Washington, trains linking Virginia with Northeastern cities will travel on significantly faster schedules north of Washington. That portion of the travel market that is time-sensitive will be attracted in greater numbers to Amtrak services.

Secondly, the continued expansion of Washington's subway system has already been a boon to Amtrak. This was demonstrated when a Metro route serving Union Station opened and an immediate jump was noticed on Amtrak's commuter trains from West Virginia and Maryland. Some New York-bound travelers shifted from the air shuttle to Amtrak at that time. This experience will be repeated in Virginia when Metro's Blue Line opens to Alexandria several years hence. This line will have a subway stop directly across from Amtrak's Alexandria station, providing an ideal opportunity to attract business travelers between Richmond and offices in the Crystal City or Rosslyn section of Arlington. It is not known if Amtrak has made any specific projections of the subway's impact on its traffic in Virginia.



The routes Amtrak is studying for additional service include several with terrible track conditions and rundown physical facilities. Amtrak has recognized this, saying, "(More train service) may indeed mean more track work, station improvements, grade crossing modifications and other measures to permit train speeds well in excess of the 55mph intercity highway limit. It will undoubtedly mean a greater need for new equipment. The obvious question is what will it all cost, and we won't know that until we do the study."

Many routes selected by Amtrak for study will indeed be expensive to upgrade. Examples:

(1) The L.A.-San Diego route, owned by the Santa Fe, is in good condition, but it is a single-track railroad with passing sidings. This route is saturated with passenger train movements and cannot efficiently accommodate more without additional sidings being built and without signal modifications.

(2) The Chicago-Indianapolis-Cincinnati route, once owned by the bankrupt Penn Central, is in such poor condition that speed limits are literally 10 and 30mph. Most signals are inoperative. Little track or signal work has been accomplished by the line's new government-sponsored owner, Conrail. Alternate routes are better, but not much better. Amtrak already has estimated that it would cost over $11 million to upgrade tracks just between Chicago and Indianapolis if passenger service is to be restored.

The Virginia Corridor poses virtually none of these capital-intensive problems. Between Washington and Richmond, the RF&P maintains its double-track system in excellent condition. This is one of the best-kept rail lines in the nation and Amtrak trains regularly travel at 79mph over the route. Between Richmond and Newport News, the Chessie System's tracks are in good condition. Some work may be needed along one stretch in Richmond to speed passenger train schedules. No major funds would be needed to double Tidewater's train service, altho some investment should be made in new and upgraded stations.

Concerned citizens in Fredericksburg and elsewhere have organized to promote operation of an Amtrak commuter train, leaving Richmond early in the morning, making local stops enroute, and arriving in Washington at the start of the business day. It would depart Washington in the evening commuter rush hour. An excellent market exists for such service.

Amtrak's exclusion of the Washington-Newport News route from its current study is totally unjustified but not surprising in light of a recent organizational change that has weakened Amtrak's planning function. Consideration of added service in the Virginia Corridor will most likely come about only if the Commonwealth's leaders let their voices be heard in the Congress and at Amtrak. While discussing issues with Amtrak, Virginians must remember that serious credibility problems exist within that organization.

LAKE PLACID OR BUST

Riding the "Olympics" railroad

The new railroad that will carry travelers to the Winter Olympics at Lake Placid NY from Utica, the Adirondack Railway, was written up two issues ago (see RTN 196). As we noted in that article, the railway ran a special excursion on Nov 9, open to the public. The material below describes that trip, and is taken from the Dec issue of High Green, newsletter of the Chesapeake and Old Dominion Divisions of the Railroad Enthusiasts, Inc.

We arrived at Utica Union Station to find that there was no Adirondack Railway train in the station. Had the trip been cancelled? We were relieved to find a large crowd in the waiting room. We were told that "the track isn't ready" and that we would be bused "about 30 minutes" north. The track work required to connect the restored Lake Placid Branch that Adirondack Railway uses with the Conrail line from Utica to Remson was apparently not yet complete, altho an earlier press train had run all the way out of Utica.

We bought first-seating dinner tickets ($14 each) and along with 200 disappointed passengers we headed out into the darkness and rain to board chartered Utica transit buses. The tour representative from the Lake Placid Resort Hotel advised us that "we didn't know until this morning that our train wasn't going to run from Utica."

We left Utica on time at 6pm. Shortly before 7pm our buses reached the train, and we transferred in a driving rain. "Where are we?" we asked. "Forestport" answered the brakeman.

The power for our train consisted of an Adirondack Railway Alco RS-3 diesel without steam and a D&H RS-3 that did have a steam generator. There were followed by a beautifully-refurbished heavyweight ex-PRR cafe-parlor car fitted out as a full dining car; an ex-PRR P70 coach converted to a bar-lounge (every other seat replaced with a table, with flipover seats retained); a modern coach nicely refurbished with thick brown carpeting; and four more P70 coaches in more or less original condition. The flipover seats were entirely comfortable for a trip of this length, altho the trip was marred by poor to non-existent heat in the rear two cars. Most passengers moved forward to the heated cars.

Dinner, tho expensive, was great for the first sitting, but those who had the fourth sitting, around midnight, reported seafood Newburg with only one shrimp as supplies dwindled. I had sirloin tips, baked potato, green peas, salad and cherry pie, washed down with great Utica Club beer and coffee.

About halfway between Forestport and Thendara we were delayed by mechanical trouble with the engine. At Thendara we were further delayed to water the train with a garden hose and re-stock the bar and diner. Thendara is the operating base of the line, and the old station has been beautifully restored. (On the return trip a fire engine substituted for the garden hose at Thendara.)

The crowd aboard cheered up after the bus episode had faded into history and the liquor had begun flowing. The crowd seemed typical of a tour bus group: couples in their 50's and 60's, widows and/or spinsters, one family with kids included, and a contingent of younger ski-train types engaged in a nonstop all-weekend party. There was a total of three railfans--our party of two and a gentleman from Miami.

We pulled into Lake Placid at 1:15am, one hour and 45 minutes late.

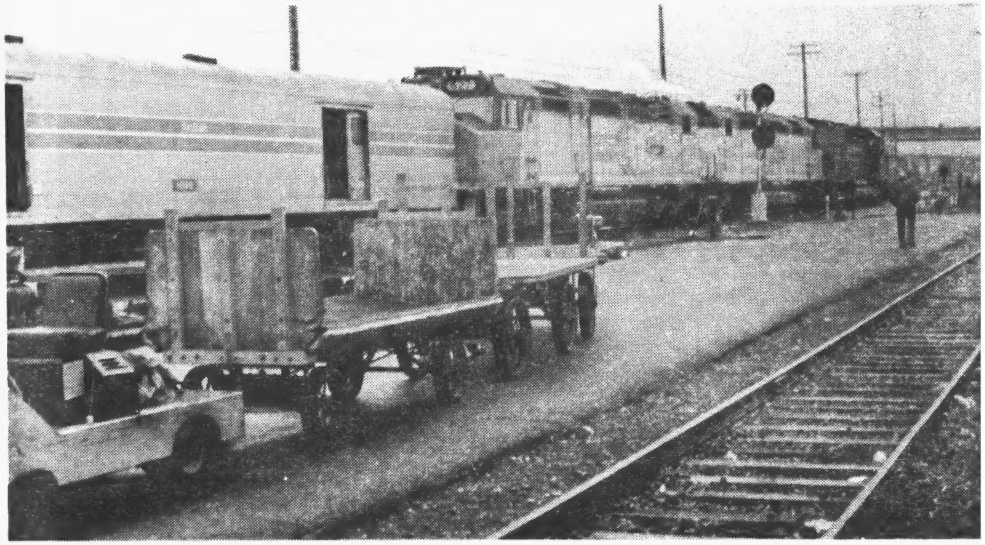
On Sunday, we pulled out of Lake Placid on time at 11am, and the weather was on our side. At Saranac Lake we were flagged down by a frantic hotel employee with a baggage-loaded van that had missed the train. We made good time thru great scenery, arriving at Thendara at 2:45pm. Stations were still standing at Placid and Saranac, incidentally. The railroad put five passengers, including us, into a company auto at Thendara and hustled us down to Utica, where we made the last train to New York (4:09pm) with ten minutes to spare. The schedule from Lake Placid to Utica had been based on the pre-Oct 28 Amtrak schedule (5:31 pm) which would theoretically have allowed an all-rail trip from Placid to New York without a major layover. However, the New York Times in October had implied that the LAKE SHORE LIMITED was the only train between New York and Utica. The article helped to sell out the run, but the confusion made most passengers drive to Utica, and some who were to arrive by train from New York didn't show up at all.

Lunch on the return trip was great, with home-made chili and soup and sandwiches. There was also plenty of fresh, hot coffee as we rolled thru the wilds. This meal cost only $4, a feat not to be taken for granted.

This is a trip that no one should miss. Never have I seen country with so many lakes. Passenger service has been gone since 1965, so this trip will become a must with "new-mileage" railfans. The first freight since 1972 has been handled--two cars of coal into Tupper Lake. Good news is that the track is in great shape, good for up to 60mph in many places. Over half of the ties have been replaced. Original superelevation has been retained on the curves. Most of the crossing signals are working, and running time will be improved when some broken crossing signals are repaired and new ones installed where needed.

It is obvious that the Adirondack Railway people have put a superhuman effort into refurbishing their track and equipment, and I wish them success. The line

LAST ONE OF THE DECADE:



DEC 31, 1979: The last departure for the '70s of the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR from Oakland prepares for takeoff, its 14 well-filled cars pulled by an SP diesel and two Amtrak SDP units. Photo by RTN.

was repaired almost from scratch. First they had to cut down the trees growing in the middle of the track. Track repair costs were funded by the Federal Economic Development Administration and the state, with the understanding that operations must be self-supporting. That explained the $14 dinner.

The basic premise is that conventional daily passenger service would not be profitable, but that they can survive as a recreational railroad concentrating on charter operations. If this trip was any indication, things may very well work out. Another charter was scheduled for Thanksgiving, to be followed by weekend service (north on Friday, roundtrip on Saturday, south on Sunday), three daily roundtrips during the Winter Olympics (Feb), then back to weekend service, with daily service commencing in June. Ski trains are also planned. A couple of thru trains from New York (Adirondack Railway equipment) during the Olympics are planned. Train information and reservations are now programmed into Amtrak's ARTS reservation system.

A 1937 timetable for the New York Central's Adirondack Division lists the following stations on the line: Utica, Remsen, Kayuta, Forestport, Woodgate, Otter Lake, McKeever, Nelson, Minnehaha, Onekio, Thendara (+ Old Forge), Moulin, Carter, Big Moose, Woods, Beaver River, Brandreth, Ne-ha-sa-ne, Robinwood, Sabattis, Horse Shoe, Mount Arab, Childwold, Piercefield, Tupper Lake Junction, Floodwood, Saranac Inn, Lake Clear Junction, Saranac Lake, and Lake Placid. Two passenger trains daily ran the route, with trains #3 and 5 leaving Utica at 1:45pm and 2am respectively, arriving at Lake Placid at 6:50pm and 7:40am. On Sunday, train 13 substituted for train 3, leaving Utica at 8:40am and arriving Lake Placid at 1:45pm. In the other direction, two daily trains, #2 and 4, left Lake Placid at 11:30am and 9:15pm, reaching Utica at 4pm and 1:55am respectively. The D&H also operated into Lake Placid using a spur from its main line to Montreal.

For more complete information, call the railroad at (315) 369-3000, Thendara Station, Box 579, Old Forge NY 13420.

ESTABLISHING A LOS ANGELES TO SAN BERNARDINO COMMUTER LINE

One of the commuter train routes needed in Southern California is the run between Los Angeles and San Bernardino, the route used by Amtrak's SOUTHWEST LIMITED and DESERT WIND. The California Dept. of Transportation (Caltrans) has been preparing a study of the route, and in December published its complete report.

The study updates two earlier studies: Carl Englund's Commuter Railroad Feasibility Study and San Bernardino County's County Transit Alternatives Analysis. The Caltrans study evaluated three possible lines to San Bernardino--the Santa Fe (used by the above Amtrak trains), the Union Pacific, and the Southern Pacific.

Caltrans concludes that the Santa Fe is the most feasible commuter route because: (1) it has existing Amtrak service, (2) it has four existing manned Amtrak stations, (3) most of the former station sites can be used, (4) it has the lightest freight traffic, (5) all of the public road crossings are fully protected, (6) the route has the least number of crossing accidents, and (7) it is the shortest in mileage and time.

The Union Pacific was ruled out because it has no existing passenger service, there are 28 scheduled freights per day minimum, the tracks might require upgrading, it has seven road crossings without protective gates, it has the highest road crossing accident rate of the three routes, it is the longest in mileage and time,

and would require new station locations except at East Los Angeles, Pomona and Riverside. The Southern Pacific route was rejected because "among other things, it is one of the nation's heaviest tonnage freight routes and operates between 35 and 50 freights per day on the overall route".

After studying the routes, Caltrans recommended that:

(1) Commuter passenger rail service be implemented on the Santa Fe route.

(2) A passenger railroad operator be requested to operate the service under the direction of Caltrans for a 3-year demonstration period. Caltrans will be responsible for management, scheduling, marketing, feeder service and feeder service coordination, facilities improvement, and service monitoring.

(3) The service consist of two trains in the morning peak commute hours from San Bernardino to Los Angeles and two trains in the evening peak commute hours from Los Angeles to San Bernardino.

(4) Initially there be nine stations: San Bernardino, Fontana, Upland, Pomona, Glendora, Azusa, Monrovia, Pasadena and Los Angeles.

(5) There be connecting bus service from Riverside to the San Bernardino Amtrak station.

(6) Two pedestrian crossing devices be installed at Avenue 41 and Avenue 43 in Highland Park (a district in Los Angeles).

Estimated costs for the first year are $3,491,800. This consists of startup costs of $1,440,400 for stations and signals; $700,000 for locomotives and cars (assuming equipment is leased; Caltrans said that in some cases outright purchase might cost less); and $1,730,800 for operating expenses; less expected revenues of $379,000. These costs are in 1979 dollars. After the first year, costs would be the same except that startup costs would be eliminated, and a Federal contribution of $120,000 is expected.

The total mileage of the line is 59.5 (Amtrak's timetable rounds it off to 60). The entire track is owned by Santa Fe, except for a half-mile owned by LAUPT, and the entire route is single track. The track is in good condition, reports Caltrans, and consists of heavy jointed rail. There are about six freights per day in each direction, plus the two daily Amtrak roundtrips. Since it is a secondary Santa Fe route, a relief route used as an overflow for freight traffic, there still exists a moderate volume of road switcher movements. The 59.5-mile route is shorter than the UP's 69 miles, and estimated running time for a 6-car commuter train is one hour, 33 minutes, compared to 1:43 on the UP line. Caltrans found that all local speed restrictions along the route had been suspended by action of the Public Utilities Commission, altho in some places the railroad observes local speed limits even tho they are not legally valid.

If the Union Pacific route had been chosen, station stops would be: San Bernardino, Riverside, Ontario, Pomona, Rowland Heights, City of Industry, Pico Rivera, East Los Angeles, and Los Angeles. Caltrans did find that the UP route would generate 50% more patronage than the Santa Fe route, but that was the "only advantage" and is "far outweighed by the disadvantages in using the route for quick implementation of commute rail service." Caltrans noted that "...Union Pacific officials indicate their company policy still opposes passenger rail service on their route." Startup costs for the UP route would be $750,000 higher than for the Santa Fe. First-year total costs on the UP line would be $4,253,300.

The SP line studied currently carries the SUNSET LIMITED, with Pomona the only scheduled stop on it. Caltrans quickly ruled out use of that route.

While not mentioned by name in the report, it is clear that Amtrak would be the operator of the proposed commuter service.

The proposed schedule for the run has morning trains leaving San Bernardino at 6:05 and 6:42, reaching LAUPT at 7:38 and 8:15am. Evening trains would leave L.A. at 5:15 and 5:45 and arrive in San Bernardino at 6:48 and 7:18pm.

As the service develops, additional stops to be considered are Rancho Cucamonga, Montclair, Arcadia and South Pasadena.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AMTRAK'S LITTLE ROCK ticket office broke all previous yearly sales and ridership records in 1979, station agent Randall Cookus said in a Jan 9 press release. The total of passengers handled in 1979 was 20,168--compared to 10,570 for 1978, a 91% increase. Revenue increased from $111,589 to $340,633.....

A CONRAIL FREIGHT derailed 10 cars at Wallingford CT at 3:15am on Jan 10 and blocked both tracks of Amtrak's Inland Route. The southbound MONTREALER was halted at Hartford and passengers bused on. The southbound BANKERS was annulled. The line was expected to be open by 8pm.....

AMTRAK SCHEDULE CHANGE on Feb 3 will find a second SAN JOAQUIN running (see news item on page 5). A schedule flipflop for the CARDINAL had been expected on that date, but will now occur no sooner than Apr 27. No startup date has been set for the Peoria train or the Indianapolis train. The 7th SAN DIEGAN, previously expected to begin Feb 3, is now in limbo, as mentioned here earlier. The proposed overnight Los Angeles-Northern California train on the COAST STARLIGHT route is still under arbitration, with no word on the outcome as we go to press.....

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WATERBURY-TO-BRIDGEPORT Conn. rail service began just before 7am on Dec 10 after an absence of 1½ years, during which time buses filled in. An RDC car is used for the revived service, operated by Conrail with four roundtrips daily. A $750,000 state grant paid for renovation of the line. The first run was well-patronized, and riders pronounced the track condition smooth.....

AMTRAK PRESIDENT BOYD in an interview with the press in Seattle recently said that he preferred to have the EMPIRE BUILDER restored to daily operation before bringing back the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA. Boyd and BN officials are reported extremely pleased at a great improvement in on-time performance for the BUILDER since conversion to all-electric Superliner equipment on Oct 28. The train often is exactly on time westbound into Spokane and Seattle. Crew members complain about the rough ride of the Superliner equipment. Daily operation over Christmas was well-patronized on many sections of the line.....

DECEMBER 31 TURNDOWN of the employee-sponsored plan for takeover of the Milwaukee Road line between Louisville KY and Seattle WA by the ICC lays foundations for ending service west of Miles City MT. A San Francisco-based short-line operator has expressed interest in obtaining rights to operate the line west of Miles City. Washington State newspapers are critical of Gov. Dixy Lee Ray for not fighting to save the line, and cite her close relationship with BN VP Paul Watanabe.....

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RENO FUN TRAIN begins its seasonal operation Jan 18 from Oakland CA. This unnumbered, unlisted Amtrak train leaves Oakland Fridays at 6:30pm (with bus from San Francisco leaving at 6pm), Richmond 6:50, Martinez 7:20, Sacramento 8:40, and Reno arrival at 2am. Returning on Sundays it leaves Reno at 11am, Sacramento 4:05pm, Martinez 5:40, Richmond 6:15, Oakland 6:30, and San Francisco (bu bus) 7:20pm. The trip package includes accommodations in Reno.....

FAMOUS RAIL BUFF E. M. Frimbo (Rogers Whitaker) took a rail trip across Canada in December, and rode the Edmonton LRT line for the first time.....

WESTBOUND BROADWAY LIMITED's second section suffered a minor derailment at Harrisburg on Dec 17. As the diesel engines were being attached, engine 439 derailed in the yard. The train was delayed over an hour while the engine was re-railed. Consist was: engines 299, 439 (replacing GG1 4925); cars 1243, 1185, 5602, 5675, 5432, 8016, and SR sleeper "Holston River".....

LAKE SHORE LIMITED has a very padded schedule, concludes a rider who was aboard eastbound on Dec 26-27. "We left Elkhart 18mins late but arrived Toledo early, waited 15mins for time at Sandusky, had a 20-min delay at Syracuse made up before Albany, and arrived Boston 15mins early despite very slow running on the B&A".....

THE SOUTHWEST LIMITED westbound was delayed at Ft. Madison 72mins because only one steam generator was working and the rear three sleepers had frozen up. The train was thawed and senton, but had more difficulty and sat in Marceline MO for over an hour thawing steam lines, and proceeded to Kansas City under a 50mph speed restriction. It reached there at 4:15am on Jan 8--4hrs, 10mins late--and was held for an engine from the eastbound train, while it received steam from station ground lines. The train finally left Kansas City 6hrs, 54mins late. Consist was engines 516, 523, 524 (off train 4); cars 1267, 1223, 9990, 9928, 9959, 9948, 9972, 9984, 9912, 2266 "Placid Sea", 2662 "Silver Prairie", 2552 "Brooklyn Bridge", and ATSF business car 53 "Mountainair" (off at K.C.). The eastbound train gave up its second engine to #3, leaving it with engines 525 and 511 and 11 cars.....

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of RR Passengers, Region XII, will have an annual meeting at 10am Feb 9 at the Marines Memorial Club, 609 Sutter St, San Francisco.....

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"SUGAR BOWL SPECIAL" was operated by Hogtrain Inc. Little Rock-Memphis-New Orleans leaving 8pm Dec 31 and returning 6pm Jan 1. The train ran on the MoPac Little Rock-Memphis and on ICG Memphis-New Orleans. The northbound return train ran on the ICG as a second section of the PANAMA LIMITED. Consist was engines 319 & 247 (F40s); cars 1158, 21206, 21111, 20031, 21117, 20012, 21156, 21072, and private 10/6 car "Cynthia".....

THE SUNSET LIMITED, train 1, left New Orleans an hour late on Dec 14 when it waited for an SP crew who brought train 2 in at 6am, 9hrs, 15mins late. A union rule is that a crew must have 8 hours' rest; Amtrak asked for a fresh crew and SP said it didn't have one.....

MAGNER-O'HARA SCENIC RAILWAY between Detroit and Traverse City could be running by next June if the two businessmen who plan the passenger run have their way. A 6-7 hour ride would be marketed, using the tracks of the Chessie System, Grand Trunk Western and Michigan Interstate. Daily summer operation and weekend operation in winter is planned. Final ICC approval must still be obtained.....

A MOKSRAIL MEETING (MOKSRAIL is the Missouri-Kansas Rail Passenger Coalition) will be held in Jefferson City MO at 1pm on Jan 19. It is combined with an excursion from Kansas City and back on the ANN RUTLEDGE. Info: 913-827-6515.....

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AMTRAK'S EQUIPMENT SHORTAGE: Does it exist or not? Rail critic Joe Vranich complains: "Amtrak's credibility regarding equipment is in serious question. prior to Oct 1, 1979 Amtrak claimed that a system cutback was necessary because of 'severe' and 'critical' equipment constraints. A cutback did occur on Oct 1, but most of the system was retained as a result of energy-crisis ridership increases. Thus, it would appear that Amtrak would continue to be strained by equipment shortages. In reality, after Oct 1 Amtrak returned several dozen passenger cars to Southern Railway--cars that could continue operating for years if overhauled and modernized. Upon inquiry, Amtrak justified return of the cars by saying it now had a 'surplus' of equipment. Several interests plan to ask the appropriate Congressional Committees to investigate this untoward development." In an earlier issue we reported on a letter by Amtrak's Clark Tyler in which he stated that "all" of Amtrak's equipment would eventually be electrified. We recently asked Amtrak about this again. A spokesman said that he knew of no plans to electrify everything Amtrak has. He called attention to the fact that there are the A list and the B list of Amtrak conventional cars. No cars on the B list have yet been electrified. At some point, all Amtrak equipment certainly will be electric-powered. The question is, which cars will be kept? No dome cars have

been electrified yet, and the way things are going, the dome car may be on the route to extinction in America. However, the dome car is one of the best selling points for rail travel from the passenger's standpoint. You will certainly hear more about this problem as time goes on.....

THE ADIRONDACK RAILWAY was to start regular operation to Lake Placid Jan 4. A train will leave Utica NY at 5:30pm, arriving at 10:55. It leaves Lake Placid 10:30am on Sunday, to reach Utica at 3:55pm. Eastbound Amtrak trains are in Utica at 7:32am, 7:56am, 11:36am, and 4:09pm, while westbound times are 12:21pm, 5:08pm, 10:08pm, and 11:52pm. See the article starting on page 12.....

THOMAS COOK LIMITED bought a Wagons-Lits dining car in Dec 1978 to mark the 50th anniversary of the special relationship between Thomas Cook and Wagons-Lits. The car is #2975, built in Italy in 1927, and now used on the Nene Valley Railway at Peterborough, England. The Cook Timetable Publishing Office has now prepared a souvenir wall plaque of this car (shown above) in plastic, in blue-and-gold livery. The souvenir is about 5½x16¼ inches and is available by airmail for $10.50 U.S. or $12 Canadian dollars. Cook also now has the second edition of its Rail Map of Europe, published every 2 years. The new map is covered in durable laminate, and can be purchased by mail for $4.50 U.S. (airmail). The address for both is: Thomas Cook Ltd, Timetable Publ. Office, PO Box 36, Peterborough PE3 6SB, England.....

THE BROADWAY LIMITED ran in two sections during the heavy holiday period. The last day of this splitting was Jan 5 westbound and Jan 6 eastbound. Train personnel said that during the holidays timekeeping was excellent, and ability to make up time was much better thanks to Conrail's track program. The track, however, is still plagued with slow orders between Van Wert OH and Fort Wayne IN, and it's still a rough ride in Ohio and Indiana. The two sections were too small--the NY train had 3 coaches, one sleeper and one slumbercoach, and the Washington train had 3 coaches and one sleeper. That consist was not expanded even during peak days. In past years, both sections were expanded. In contrast, the LAKE SHORE had 7-8 coaches all during Christmas season--15 cars total with three F40 engines many days. Conrail's Fort Wayne Division will get 80 miles of welded rail this year on the eastbound main, which should improve the BROADWAY's ride.....

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THE INTER-AMERICAN is expected to get a schedule change Apr 27. Under consideration is a southbound schedule that is an extension of the present STATE HOUSE schedule--that train leaves Chicago at 5:20pm. This would result in overnight travel both ways north of Little Rock, and daytime travel south of there.....

THE CHESSIE SYSTEM added Western Maryland Railway engine #195 to its B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore, according to a Jan 3 announcement. The 1953-vintage engine is a road switcher diesel, an RS-3 type built by Alco.....

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION Neil Goldschmidt was the subject of a civil suit filed by Kennedy supporters the last week of December, which charged that Goldschmidt was using Federal funds to support Carter's renomination. Goldschmidt had earlier remarked that he would withhold transportation funds from Chicago because Mayor Jane Byrne did not support Carter for re-election. Goldschmidt later denied that he would actually hold back on the federal funding.....

THE PANAMA LIMITED left Durant MS southbound on Dec 20 and it was soon discovered that an abandoned 2-year old child was wandering about the train. The child was put off in custody of police at Canton MS. The child's family did not inquire about the missing member until 7 hours later. How could the parents not miss the child so long? The answer: the family was traveling with 13 children.....

SENIOR CITIZEN FARES are now in effect on Amtrak. They grant a 25% reduction from regular fares of $40 or more, and are good in first class also. The new plan, which also covers the handicapped, became effective on Jan 1.....

AMTRAK FLAG STOP will be established at Hancock WV/MD on Feb 3, on the route of the SHENANDOAH. It provides service to the resort town of Berkeley Springs.....

AUTOMATIC TICKETING MACHINE will be developed and tested by Amtrak. Amtrak's Board of Directors in Dec authorized development of a prototype system to be tested in Washington and Philadelphia by July 1980.....

FIRST MAJOR SNOWSTORM of the year hit the East Coast the weekend of Jan 5-6, and brought snow to the Lake Placid Olympics site.....

EASTBOUND LAKE SHORE was annulled at Pittsfield MA on Dec 14 and passengers bused on because of a Conrail freight derailment east of Pittsfield blocking the line. When the line opened, the equipment deadheaded to Boston to become train 449 of the next day. The westbound train ran on the 14th with no delay.....

POST ROAD TRACKAGE speed for the LAKE SHORE has been raised from 30 to 50mph from MP194 to Rensselaer. It remains at 30mph from Post Road to MP194. The higher speed portion contains no grade crossings..... TWO MAIL CARS have been carried on trains 448 and 449 all during December, and it may continue into this year, as the Postal Service is shipping extra mail by the train. On Dec 14 westbound there was so much mail at Boston that a full trailer of USPS containers was turned away at Springfield, the other loading point. Mail is sealed for Chicago delivery.....

AUTOMATIC TEMPERATURE CONTROL thermostats for 68° operation are being replaced in some Amtrak electrified coaches with 72° units for winter operation. Modules can be switched on board bytraveling electricians.....

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT (continued from page 7)

tracks, was struck by an eastbound train at 4:57pm. On New Year's Eve several BART stations gave out free coffee and doughnuts "to promote safe holiday travel".

NEW YORK STATE transportation officials have recently held talks with Amtrak regarding the latter's possibly taking over operation of the Conrail-run lines serving New York, Westchester and Putnam.

TWO SUBWAY TRAINS in Philadelphia's Broad Street collided headon early on Dec 13, injuring three crewmen.

SKOKIE-SWIFT LINE of Chicago's rapid transit system might be extended about a mile to the Old Orchard Shopping Center, under a plan now being studied by the North Suburban Mass Transit District.

NEW YORK'S MAYOR was withdrawing 144 policemen at the end of the year, who had been assisting the city's transit police in crime-fighting. Budget restrictions were cited for the reduction.

THE SAN FRANCISCO Muni subway is nearing opening. A first fire drill was held on Dec 28, and the results were called only "fair." The most recent Jan 14 estimate of opening day will not be met.

75 PER CENT of the nation's drivers favor the 55mph highway speed limit, the DOT announced Jan 1 following a public opinion survey it conducted.

CARS & CONSISTS

*DESERT WIND, train 36, Las Vegas Jan 6: engines 291, 229 (F40s); cars 1237 bag, 21858 Amcoach, 20229 Amdinette, 21821 Amcoach, 20038 Amcafe, 21260 Amcoach. 291, 20038 & 21260 off at L.V. Train 35, same Jan 7: engines 291, 230; cars 1262 bag, 21827 coach, 20232 dinette, 21826 coach, 20038 cafe, 21260 coach. 291, 20038 & 21260 added at L.V.

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 1, New Orleans Dec 14: engines 535, 519 (SDPs); cars 1115, 9942, 9946, 9926, 4461, 3313, 8041, 2718 "Pine Dawn", 2213 "Indian Flute", 2851 "Enoree River", 2214 "Indian Lake". Same Dec 28: engines 536, 530 (SDPs); cars 1256, 9941, 9905, 4861, 4530, 4480, 3313, 8024, 2671 "Silver Plateau", 2266 "Placid Sea", 2802 "Halifax County", 2722 "Pine Island".

*CRESCENT, train 20, New Orleans Dec 24: engines 256 (F40), 420 & 422 (Es); cars 1270, 1411, 5427, 5421, 5476, 5624, 5441, 5458, 3324 "General Lafayette", 8383, 2653 "Silver Cliff", 2802 "Halifax County", 2864. Same Dec 31: engines 256 (F40), 420 & 422 (Es); cars 1244, 1405, 5436, 6017, 6027, 5660, 5435, 5252, 5416, 5656, 3327, 8382, 2856 "Seneca River", 2642 "Pacific Waves", 2860 "Tye River".

*EMPIRE BUILDER, train 7, Chicago Dec 20: engines 317, 267 (F40s); cars 1152, 2053 (dorm), 2881 slpr, 39910 Hi-level stepdown coach, Superliner cars 38006 diner, coaches 34062 (lower level as lounge), 34060, 34032, 34047, 34040. Same, train 8, Minneapolis Dec 28: engines 284, 292 (F40s); cars 1150, 1450 bag-dorm, slpr 2990 "Joseph V. MacDonald", Hi-level stepdown coach 39920, Superliner cars 38009 diner, coaches 34057, 34026, 34002.

*NORTH STAR, train 9, Minneapolis Jan 2: engine 328 (F40); cars 1267, slpr 2982 "Pine Rapid", Amcafe 20222, Amcoaches 21153, 21885.

*INTER-AMERICAN, train 21, Chicago Dec 30: engines 247, 319, 326, 240 (F40s); cars 1359, slpr 2984, Amfleet cars 20225, 21230, 21874, 20026, 21880, 21193, 21072, 21156, 20012, 21117, 20031, 21111, 21206, baggage 1158.

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, Kansas City Dec 21: engines 505, 524, 525 (SDPs); cars 1104, 1229, 9995, 9933, 9944, 9975, 9985, 9921, 8039, 8034, 5667 (on at Newton), 2253 "Star Range", 2751 "Palm Dome", 2755 "Palm Lore", 2239 "Elberton". 9:19 late.

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 49, arriving Albany Dec 10: engines 298, 300 (F40s); cars 1610 bag-dorm, 2052, 2940, 8501, 20044 Amcafe as lounge, 4622, 4621, 4625, 693 power car. Train 449, same: engine 225 (F40); cars 20014 (Amcafe), 4616, 4610, 2915 "Pacific Hills", 1230, 1240. At Albany power car 693 removed & following from #449 were added to 49: 4616, 4610, 2915, 1230, 1240.

*SAN JOAQUIN, train 710, Oakland Dec 28: engine 233 (F40); cars 21194, 20037 Amcafe, 21195, 20036 Amcafe as coach.

Effective Feb 1, 1980 the price of RTN will be increased. The cover price will be changed to 65¢, and the yearly subscription rate for 24 issues to $15.00, or 62.5¢ a copy. In order to keep the price as low as possible, we have been operating with a minimal production staff and cutting costs to the bone. As we read comments from subscribers we can only conclude that a rate increase would be in the best interests of all concerned. Readers want RTN to be published reliably twice monthly. Our present small, overworked staff cannot operate reliably enough to fulfill readers' expectations, especially in light of continued inflationary price increases. The high price of silver is driving up film prices 30%, and along with them other materials used in printing. Printing materials are rising at a rate higher than the general rate of inflation. To realistically cover the costs of publishing RTN twice monthly, we must request this 25¢ per month increase in subscription rates. From reader comments, we are confident that this setting of RTN on a sounder footing will be viewed with favor. And the new rate is still lower than that of other, similar publications.

Rate The Trains

RTN is resuming its train rating surveys. You can submit your ratings now on regularly-scheduled North American passenger trains (not commuter) that you have personally ridden since Oct 28, 1979.

INSTRUCTIONS: Rate each train on each of the 11 categories (A-K) listed below: (A) Your overall impression of the train, taking everything into account; (B) Service from operating crew (conductor, etc.); (C) Dining or snack crew service; (D) Lounge crew service; (E) Food quality; (F) Car mechanical condition; (G) Car cleanliness and housekeeping; (H) Condition of track & roadbed; (I) Desirability of train's schedule; (J) Condition of stations: (K) Appropriateness of type of equipment used.

Use the 9-point rating scale below. Do not use previous rating forms, as we have changed some of the categories. Put ratings on separate sheet from other correspondence.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9

Extremely poor ▲ Average, acceptable ▲ Extremely good

RTN'S TRAIN RATING FORM

NAME & ADDRESS:

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Can we use your name? _____

TRAIN NAME & NUMBER	DATE RIDDEN	A Overall	B Operating Crew	C Dining Crew	D Lounge Crew	E Food Quality	F Car Condition (mechanical)	G Car Cleanliness	H Track Condition	I Scheduling	J Station Condition	K Type of Cars (appropriate?)	COMMENT SYMBOL*
													①
													②
													③
													④
													⑤
													⑥
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	

*COMMENTS: To add comments, copy circled number on separate sheet, write train name after it, followed by your comments.

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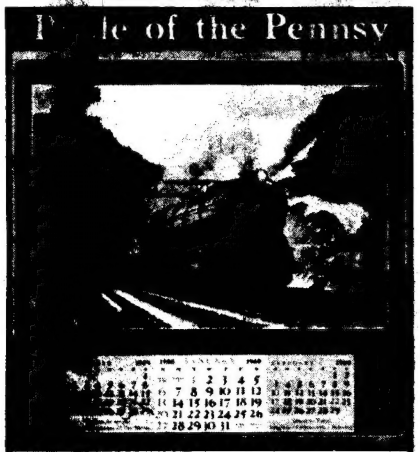

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